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Sicily: an extraordinary historical heritage forging the future

Shanghai, August 16th 2010 – The Italian Pavilion at the 2010 Shanghai World Expo host the 7th Exhibition of Italian Regions: Sicily, from the 16th to the 23rd of August.

The cradle of Mediterranean civilization and crucial intersection of the Ancient World, the area was highly regarded as part of **Magna Graecia**, with **Cicero** describing **Siracusa** as the greatest and most beautiful city of all **Ancient Greece**. **Archimedes**, one of the Ancient World's greatest scientist/mathematicians, was a native Sicilian, born in the city of Siracusae (modern **Siracusa**).

The Councilor of Cultural Heritage of the Sicilian Region, Gaetano Armao, and the Councilor of Education Mario Centorrino, with Maria Assunta Accili, Secretary General of the Commission of Italy for the 2010 Shanghai World Expo, inaugurated the exhibition on the 2nd floor of the Italian Pavilion.

For the very first time in Shanghai, unique art masterpieces - part of Sicily's extraordinary historical heritage – were displayed:

- the *Caltavuturo Phial* from Palermo is a solid gold drinking cup, considered to be a masterpiece of ancient jewellery – made and dated between IV and III century BC
- the *Treasure from Morgantina*: these are sophisticated silver vessels from the Hellenistic Period (late 3rd to the 1st century BC) that are considered to be of rare artistic value
- the original manuscript "*Sinarum scientia politico-moralis*" by the Sicilian Jesuit missionary Prospero Intorcetta (1625-1696), of the first Latin translation of Confucius's work "The Doctrine of the Mean".

In addition to providing such a valuable artistic exhibition set up in the "Hall of Regions" in the Italian Pavilion, Sicily paid homage to the Chinese with a precious limited edition of Intorcetta's manuscript-a testament to its commitment to future cultural and economic relationships with China.

Furthermore, the Sicilian economic delegation was also in China to evaluate the possibility for a direct flight from Sicily to China to strengthen future economic and cultural arrangements.

Background information:

Sicily is the largest island in the [Mediterranean Sea](#), one of the two Italian Islands, and the largest Italian region. With breathtaking landscapes and cities, Sicily offers a wide selection of holiday options spanning archaeological, historical and naturalistic attractions and has continued to attract significant [tourism](#) in the modern age on account of the natural beauty of the region. .

Sicily is already present at the Italian Pavilion showing off the best of its technology and cultural heritage. In the permanent exhibition on the ground floor, visitors can find:

The Sicilian Altar Frontals: Among the most precious art pieces at the Italian Pavilion, these polychrome embroideries on Chinese silk were originally made to decorate church altars. Made of gold and silver threads and coral beads, they represent ideal architectural sceneries. These ornaments, used during the 16 - 17th centuries, are now displayed abroad for the first time in history.

Massimo Opera Theatre of Palermo: A wooden architectural model of the third largest opera house in Europe and the largest theatre in Italy located on the Piazza Verdi in [Palermo](#). The opera house was built by the architect [Giovanni Battista Filippo Basile](#) and, following his death in 1891, the construction was overseen by his son, [Ernesto](#).

Messina Strait Bridge: A model of the world's longest suspension bridge of a single span which will arch Sicily to the mainland. The bridge will cross the Strait of Messina with a single 3300 meter central span, surpassing the current longest span of the Akashi Kaikyo Bridge in Japan (1991 meters) by two thirds. This bridge will have a total length of 3,666 meters, a deck of 60.4 meters, six traffic lanes, two service lanes and two railway lines, which will support 140,000 vehicles and 200 trains per day. This will cut down transit times that sometimes reach 12 hours down to mere minutes.

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